

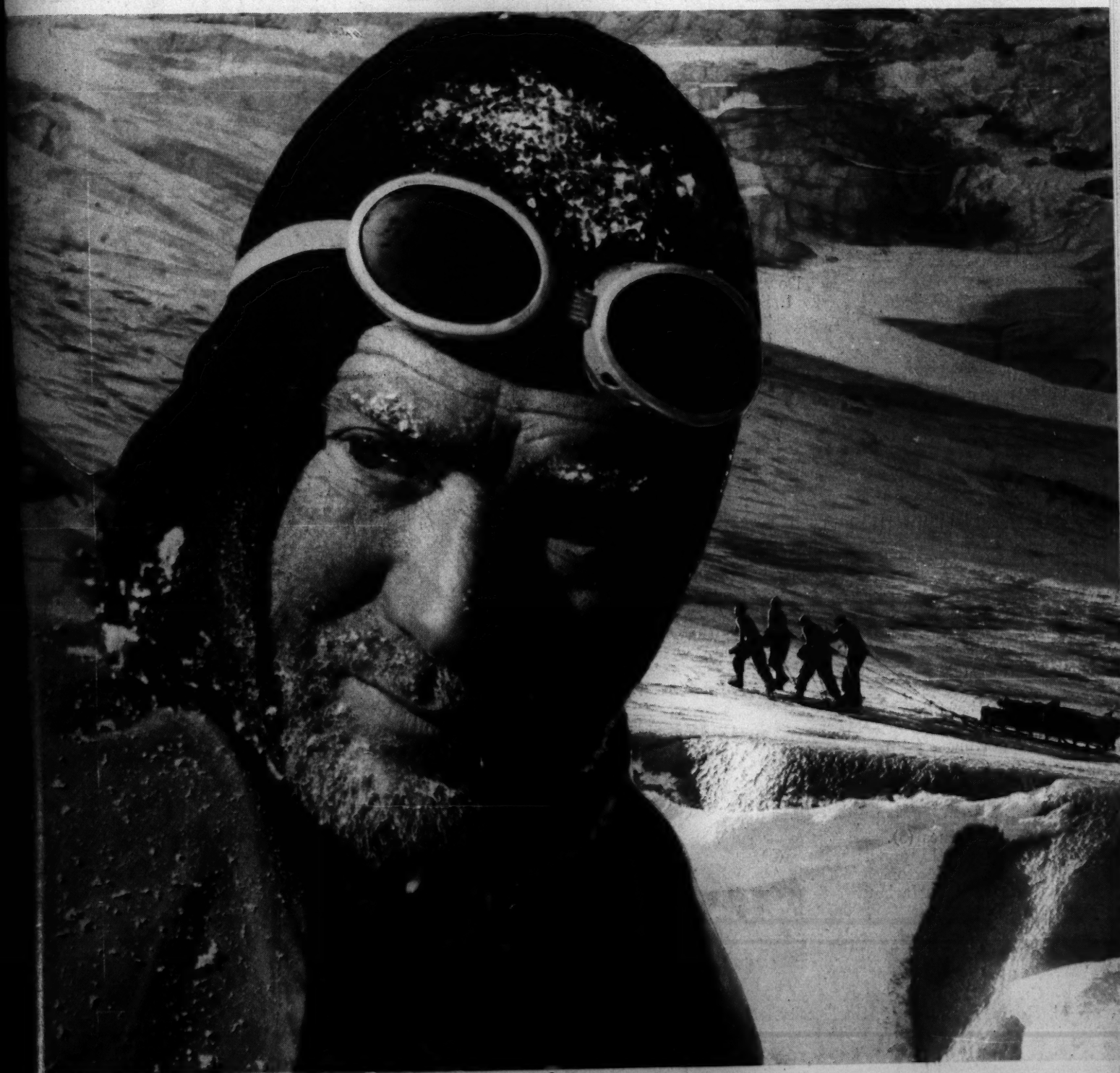
Film MONTHLY REVIEW

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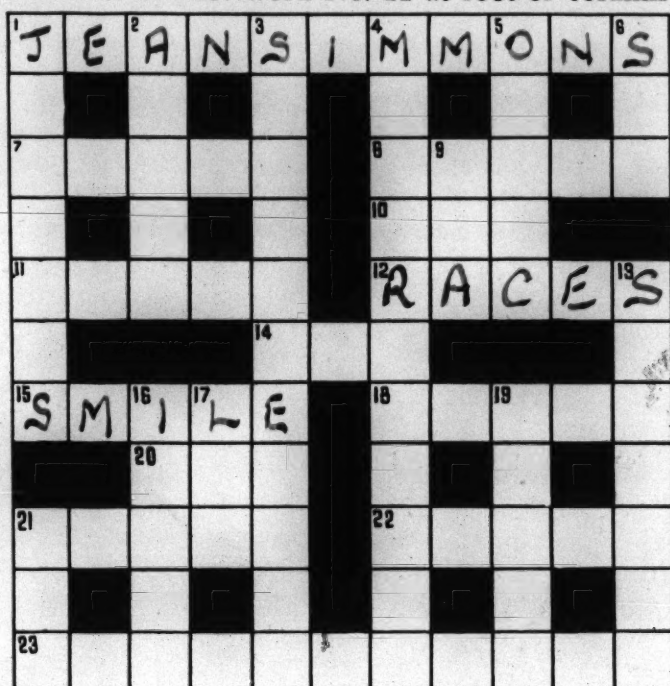


FILM MONTHLY REVIEW FEATURES "SCOTT OF THE ANTARCTIC"

FILM CROSSWORD No. 12

SOLUTION NEXT MONTH

Solution to Crossword No. 11 at foot of column



ACROSS

1. Olivier's Ophelia (4, 7).
7. A famous French film name (5).
8. Famous city of Indian films (5).
10. The age in Vera—Ellen (3).
11. First name of many American business men in films (5).
12. The Marx Brothers spent a day there (5).
14. Surname of late canine hero (3).
15. The Gioconda this was made into the film of "A Woman's Vengeance" (5).
18. "M" is probably the shortest film one on record (5).
20. Balcon and Korda share this (3).
21. Change Wales into this supporting actor of numerous films (5).
22. Change 19 down into this musical composition often heard in church scenes (5).
23. She played opposite Robert Newton in "Temptation Harbour" (6, 5).

DOWN

1. Shapely Adele was in "Down To Earth" (7).
2. The film public's seems to be "British films are best" (5).
3. A rut's winter makes a well known Hollywood comedy actor (6, 5).
4. In which Chaplin discovered Paulette Goddard (6, 5).
5. Peter Lorre was in the film about his hands (5).
6. Rescue squads in films like "Broken Journey" need to do this (3).
9. 10 across is also in Vera Vague (3).
13. Another vowel would make him a bony framework! (7).
16. Most of the citizens in Maria Montez films practise this religion (5).
17. Bette Davis and Mary Astor starred (3).
19. There's a song about one in "Rose Marie" (5).
21. Alan Ladd film title changed for distress signal (3).

CLUES ACROSS.—1, Jack Warner. 7, Norma. 8, Champ. 9, Holmes. 10, Ball. 12, Late. 14, Stella. 17, O'hara. 18, Loves. 19, Laraine Day.

CLUES DOWN.—1, Jane Hylton. 2, Carol. 3, Weaver. 4, Rock. 5, Edana. 6, Spoliansky. 1, Stolen. 13, Tiara. 15, Livid. 16, Lana.

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CHARLES FREND

Charles Frend's name is closely associated with films of documentary nature, and what better subject could he have found to direct than "Scott of the Antarctic"?

CHARLES FREND, as director of *Scott of the Antarctic* one of the most important films ever to come from Ealing Studios, has a film subject after his own heart. Among Britain's younger directors, his name has become closely associated with films dealing with out-of-door themes, usually a blend of documentary and fiction. He is, therefore, the ideal director for *Scott of the Antarctic*, which is a dramatic reconstruction of the original expedition in 1910 and which will bring to the screen the contrast between the vast snow landscapes and the emotions of the men who pitted their strength against the climatic hazards of the Antarctic.

Charles Frend, was born in Pulborough, Sussex, on November 21st, 1909. He was educated at King's School, Canterbury, and Trinity College, Oxford. It was while he was at

Oxford that he decided on a career in film production. To acquaint himself with the current cinema he became film critic of the "Isis." When talkies came to Oxford, the late Donald Calthrop officiated at the change-over ceremony at a local cinema and Frend interviewed him for his paper. That was his first contact with a film personality and one which was to have far-reaching results.

Later, when the time came for him to start his career, Charles Frend wrote to Calthrop, reminding him of the interview and asking him to suggest people he might approach for an opening in the film industry. Calthrop responded by putting him in touch with B.I.P. studios at Elstree and there the young man went to learn the business of cutting. He assisted with the cutting of one of Hitchcock's early films *Lord Camber's Ladies*. Hitchcock then went over to Gaumont-British to make *Waltzes from Vienna*. Charles Frend rang him and said how much he would like to cut his new film. It was a wild idea in view of his relative "rawness" but it worked and he became a fully fledged film editor overnight!

He remained with Gaumont-British from 1933 to 1937 and became one of their best cutters. Among the films he edited were *Secret Agent*, *Sabotage* and *Young and Innocent*. He then went over to M.G.M. and cut three American films made in Britain. *A Yank at Oxford* (under American expert Margaret Booth), *The Citadel* and *Goodbye Mr. Chips*.

On the outbreak of war he helped with the cutting of *The Lion Has Wings* and was sole editor of *Major Barbara*.

When he joined Ealing Studios in 1941, Charles Frend progressed from editing to directing films. His first picture *The Big Blockade*, was a purely documentary film with fictitious characters. He has followed this trend in such notable Ealing films as *The Foreman Went to France*, *San Demetrio*, *London*, and *The Return of the Vikings*. His more recent films are *Johnny Frenchman* and *The Loves of Joanna Godden*. *Scott of the Antarctic*, again half documentary in nature, is the greatest and most ambitious of his films yet.



... he became a fully fledged film editor overnight!

Searching For Facts

by E. J. Tytler

The department is described by E. J. Tytler, which sees that the Union Jack is not hoisted before it was designed, or a letter posted before stamps existed.

WHEN feature films were first made, the producer would start "shooting" with little more than an idea, making up the story as he went along, a method still used to this day by Charles Chaplin. Later, somebody conceived the idea of writing a complete story outline, and still later it occurred to a producer to write up the story in a way similar to that of a stage play. As a result, it became necessary to have the film made by one who knew the whole story, and who could visualise the place of each sequence and "shot" in the completed story. In this way the script came into existence and the first film director was appointed.

Warners Start a Research Department

In those early days of the silent film few bothered very much about historical inaccuracies until some far sighted American producers realised that if Hollywood was to capture and hold the markets of the world, these glaring mistakes must be avoided, otherwise they would annoy cinema audiences or bring ridicule on American films. The Warner Brothers, in particular, were quick to see that if the mistakes were not in the script, they could not be in the film. A fully equipped research department was organised whose job it was to ferret out all the facts relating to clothing, furniture, customs, habits, forms of speech—every possible thing concerning the times or country in which a story was to be set. For a film having its setting in early Italian history a team of experts spent six months in research, and sent back over 10,000 photographs of old paintings, prints, and buildings.

Until 1943 British Film Studios were without a story research department, such work being left to the Scenario and Art Departments. Each went its own way, sometimes both spending time and money to get the same answers, at other times getting contradictory answers which in turn led to internal disputes and delays while producer and director tried to decide between them. Many stupid mistakes were made such as Sir Francis Drake flying the Union Jack two hundred years

before there was such a flag. In another film a post box stood on the corner of the street long before there was even a penny post, a mistake that is said to have brought in over six hundred letters of protest.

In conversation with Miss Eileen Griffiths who heads Gainsborough Studios Research Department, I learned how the department began and something of the work that it does. As is to be expected, Miss Griffiths does her work in a quiet book-lined room in a little house just a few doors from the huge studios at Shepherd's Bush, and without any of the publicity and glamour that seems inseparable from film-making. Miss Griffiths was Assistant Scenario Editor in 1943 with very definite ideas on the need for research. Taking her courage in her hand she discussed her ideas with Mr. Sidney Box, Gainsborough's Producer, who finally gave her the opportunity of setting up a Story Research Department. The result now is that in addition to her own studios, all the other producing companies in the J. Arthur Rank Organisation come to her for advice and information. In fact, while we were together Walter Forde, who is directing *The Cardboard Lover* at Denham, a comedy of Cromwell's day in which Margaret Lockwood and Sid Field are co-starring, telephoned to ask if The Merry Monarch, King Charles the Second, ever lived in the Dutch town of Breda as an exile. Within a few moments all the facts and details of his stay there were given to Mr. Forde.

Accuracy versus Entertainment

Story Research has nothing whatever to do with providing scientific data for study and research, but only with the background of an actual story, later to be turned into a script, then into a film. No detail is too small or too unimportant to be considered. For instance, supposing in a period picture a housemaid is described as polishing a floor using a tin of polish. Enquiry is immediately made from floor polish manufacturers to discover whether or not tins of polish were in use at the time, or whether in fact

the floor polish was home-made of beeswax and turps, and kept in a stone jam jar. These enquiries were recently made in connection with a popular film.

There are times, though, when a director has to decide between accuracy and romance. Recently in a picture describing an incident in Scottish history, the clansmen are seen riding on horse-back dressed in kilts when the correct dress is a pair of trews. These are close fitting plaid trousers. Historical accuracy was sacrificed in this case because kilts looked more romantic, indeed, the director defended himself by saying, "The public will expect to see kilts." Most studios take the view that if a film to be historically correct would be dramatically dull, then accuracy must give way to drama, pointing out that, after all, the public pays for entertainment and not a history lesson. An exception to this view might be made for a documentary picture, but even then some way would have to be found to dramatise a dull fact in order to make the picture acceptable to the widest possible public.

First Use of Story Research

It is interesting to know how research is brought in. Usually, producers in various ways have to consider a number of stories which might make good films, or, as sometimes happens, an idea upon which a story could be based. No matter how attractive the story or idea might be, for many reasons it may not be filmable in its original form; so it is handed over to Miss Griffiths for study from every angle. She then reports on its possibilities, and with sufficient historical details to guide the producers in making their decision. When it is finally decided to go ahead, a more thorough and detailed research takes place in order to obtain the highest degree of accuracy in presentation.

Sometimes the work is carried out in another way. Studios often commission a famous author to write a film story, which in the past meant that he would spend anything up to six or eight weeks in research alone. Both his time and the studio's money is now saved because the department does the research work in advance, and gives him all the details and facts on which to base his story.

Research is not confined only to historical or period pictures, but is devoted to many stories set in fairly recent times. It is surprising how many changes take place in our everyday life, and, of course, women's fashions are ever changing. The "New Look" was quite unknown at the time of the Coronation, yet it would be quite easy for a producer, without realising his mistake, to dress some of his "crowd" women in this style, but how soon the ladies in a cinema audience

would notice it. For a recent picture it was necessary to get the correct procedure for arresting a criminal thirty years ago when the method was quite different, while for another picture several days were spent in watching the proceedings in the Law Courts.

Compilation of Information

Research in a film studio differs vastly from research in a factory where it is a case of compiling the facts for some steadily developing process. Story research has to deal with an ever-changing subject, because no two films, even on the same subject, are treated exactly alike. Much of the information collected for the one is utterly useless for another. In addition, considerable story writing experience is required in order to appreciate and understand the value of dramatic effect.

Apart from the day-to-day work of the department, its time is spent not so much in gathering facts as in collecting information as to where those facts can be obtained, and the people who can supply them. Miss Griffiths told me that she has collected over 30,000 items of information on the sources for obtaining facts on a bewildering variety of subjects. Here are some examples which will show that the work is far from being dull and uninteresting.

In 1900 many women went to bed in white face gloves guaranteed to remove wrinkles.

Before 1890 British sailors saluted their officers by raising their hats, the present form of salute was instituted by Queen Victoria.

English gentlemen did not wear moustaches at the time of the French Revolution.

An early eighteenth century church beadle carried a staff having at one end a fox's brush, and at the other a brass knob. The brush was used to awaken the sleeping ladies in the congregation, the brass knob to awaken sleeping men.

The law compelled British motorists of 1900 to have a man walking in front carrying a red flag, but the State of Tennessee in the same period required motorists to warn the public one week in advance by inserting in a newspaper a notice stating where they were going, which way, and when, as a means of protecting the public from risk of injury.

More To Be Done

Story Research in England has a long way to go before it is organised on the same scale, and as well as in America. A start has been made, but much more remains to be done before every British Film Studio can boast that it is as well served in this respect as it is in other technical resources.

FOUR YEARS to Materialise an Idea

This is an authentic film and not just another thriller.

HOW does a film like *Scott of the Antarctic* come to be made? There must be quite a number of British Producers who are kicking themselves for not thinking of the idea themselves. It is what the film world calls a "box-office certainty." Its appeal is obvious. It has an enormous public waiting for it, irrespective of its merits as a film.

Those same producers might not perhaps have been particularly happy during the production of the picture. It was a massive task to undertake, full of problems from the start to the finish.

The suggestion to make it came from Charles Frend, now one of Britain's leading directors, but then a fledgling of a director from the cutting rooms, where he had enjoyed the reputation of being one of Britain's ace editors.

He had been toying with the idea for several years before talking to associate producer Sidney Cole about it. Cole's enthusiasm was equal to his own, and together they marched to Michael Balcon, production head of Ealing Studios, to ask him what he thought about it.

The decision to make the film was a courageous one on Balcon's part. The year was 1944. The war was still on. Ealing Studios, independent and go-ahead, were nevertheless small in comparison with many of the other companies and had always maintained a policy of making economical pictures. Nothing on the scale of *Scott of the Antarctic* had been contemplated before.

More than sheer commercial interests influenced Balcon's decision. Here, he felt, was a subject that transcended ordinary cinema entertainment. It was a subject which, if the British film industry were to justify its existence, should be made in the interests of the industry and the country as a whole. It was a chapter of recent British history which should be commemorated on the screen just as it had been commemorated in print. And it was a subject which had to be treated with complete sincerity.

There were difficulties from the word "go." So many people were concerned—people whose permission had to be sought for themselves or their relatives to be portrayed, and whose aid was essential in order to ensure accuracy.

Some were reluctant at first. They wanted to be convinced that the film would be a loyal

interpretation of Scott's epic venture, and not a commercial "thriller." The patent sincerity of the film-makers concerned soon convinced them, and one by one they gave their permission.

It took months to track some of them down. It took even longer to collect all the background material necessary. And it took over four years from the time the idea was first mooted to the time the picture was completed.

The importance of complete accuracy was realised from the first. Hosts of experts were called in to give their assistance. Few pictures have ever entailed so much research work.

Innumerable books had been written about the expedition, and every one was read. Books on the Antarctic itself were studied closely. Volumes of press cuttings, loaned by the late Lady Kennet, Scott's widow, were examined.

But the film-makers were not content with written material. That was sufficient to provide them with a detailed background. What they set out to do was to gather their facts first-hand from survivors of the expedition and from the relatives of those who died.

They had to find out more than their life stories and backgrounds. In order to ensure authentic portrayals by the artists, from the stars to the small-part players, every detail of the personal characteristics of the people concerned had to be discovered, right down to the slightest mannerisms.

How did they walk? How did they talk? Did they fidget when sitting down? Did they have such mannerisms as running their hands through their hair, or pulling at one ear? Did they move about quickly or slowly? Did they smoke? Did they write a lot or read a lot?

These were the sort of questions to which the researchers set out to find the answers. And answers had to be found, for the film was covering not only a short span in their lives but a period of three years—not only the expedition itself but the events leading to the trip. Scott and Wilson, for instance, had to be shown in their own homes.

Script writer Walter Meade spent many months talking to relatives and survivors before he put a word on paper. He spoke to people like Charles Wright, a physicist on the expedition, and the man who first detected the spot where Scott,



**Star of
The Month**

After three years in his father's grain business JOHN MILLS, born in Felixstowe, Suffolk, left home for London, studied musical comedy dancing routines, and entered the Hippodrome chorus. While playing in Singapore he was spotted by Noel Coward, who gave him an introduction to C. B. Cochran.

Of the thirty films he has made, the majority are first-class; *Great Expectations* and *Scott of the Antarctic* are two, and now he is producing and starring in *The History of Mr. Polly*.

Wilson and Bowers were buried in the snow where they had died.

And, with his great sympathy and understanding, Walter Meade was able to incorporate in the script many touches of pathos and sentiment without in any way detracting from the courage and strength of Scott and his companions.

Many of the survivors visited the Ealing Studios to give their assistance during the preparation and making of the film—people such as Professor Frank Debenham, geologist on the expedition, and F. J. Hooper, the youngest man on the trip, and Edward Mackenzie, who was leading stoker on the *Terra Nova*.

There were many others who helped behind the scenes. The Scott Polar Institute at Cambridge gave wholehearted co-operation, and commercial films which had supplied materials for the expedition loaned replicas of the original goods and in some cases actual items which had been taken on the expedition and returned to them afterwards to go into their private museums.

Technical experts were called in. One was Quintin Riley, one of the five people in existence to possess the Polar Medal with both the Arctic and the Antarctic Clasp, who has spent seven years on polar exploration. The other was David James, author-explorer, who has also explored the Antarctic.

Thus, before the film had even gone into production, an enormous amount of work had been done. Once production itself began, even greater difficulties lay ahead. Cameraman Osmond Borradaile went on a 30,000 miles location trip,

lasting for six months, to the Antarctic. It was a hazardous and adventurous trip, entailing climbs up a 600 ft. hill of solid ice with camera equipment, and for one period of two successive days and nights, a battle against a continuous 100-miles-an-hour gale.

Locations with the stars were shot in Switzerland and Norway. In Switzerland, director Charles Frend, John Mills and the unit were working at a height of 11,300 feet, transporting equipment long distances up the ice face of the glacier.

In Norway, most of the filming was done on a glacier 6,000 feet above sea level, with the temperature ranging from 3 above to 20 below zero. Each day they had a two-mile journey over ice-covered roads, and then a 45-minute climb to the summit of the plateau. For this last stage of the daily journey, three Weazels (snow-going caterpillar vehicles), loaned by the Norwegian Army with drivers, helped them to take the material to the top.

They fought against hurricanes and freezing temperatures, experiencing—to a lesser degree, of course—something of the conditions under which the Scott polar party itself lived.

Even when they returned to the studios, the filming was almost as difficult, with artificial gales and snow storms which were even more unpleasant than the real thing.

They're some of the reasons why, quite apart from its subject, *Scott of the Antarctic* is likely to be one of the most memorable pictures ever produced by a British company.

Book Guide

Books on Film Theory and Film History

"The Film Sense" by Sergei M. Eisenstein (Faber & Faber, 12/6d.) is not a book for everyone; it will delight the film or theatre expert and the highbrow. This is a theoretical book illustrated of course by many highly individual photographs. Eisenstein was a genius, and a highly individual, creative, producer of film, straight play, and opera. In the western world he is mostly known for his monumental films "Battleship Potemkin" (1925), "Ten Days That Shook The World" (1928), "Alexander Nevski" (1938) and "Ivan The Terrible" (Part 1, 1944). Eisenstein would have been a success in any of the three arts, as he was gifted for all three. It sounds strange that the Soviet authorities gave his "individualism" so much "freedom", but it is obvious that about 50 per cent. of all his productions (we in the west

know only a small part) were political propaganda films, mostly with a socialistic-communistic angle. From an artists view, his theories on the synchronisation of senses, form and content of musical illustration and synchronisation and the harmony of word, picture and scenery are most stimulating but not easy to read, requiring a lot of thought and stage or film experience.

"The Film Answers Back" by E. W. and M. M. Robsop (The Bodley Head, 15s.) is a thorough, popular history of the film in the last 40 years. All the main productions are mentioned, and besides America, England and France a great deal of space is dedicated to the German film production before and during the Hitler regime and the Second World War. From Lubitsch to Eisenstein, from Goldwyn's mass leg shows to Rene Clair's sophisticated refinements, all styles and national peculiarities are mentioned.

F. Heymann

STUDIO PERSONALITIES

He Suddenly Disappeared...

Borradaile is the camera man responsible for the scenes filmed in the Antarctic. Though he did not face Scott's dangers, his experiences were hazardous and exciting, to say the least.

BORRADAILE, although not yet fifty, is one of the veterans of film industry. He began in the old silent days as an assistant in the Jesse Lasky laboratories in Hollywood. World War I saw him in khaki, then he returned to Hollywood and went into the labs. again. Meanwhile, his pre-war colleagues who had remained in Hollywood had been promoted, many of them to camera-work. Borradaile asked for promotion too, and was appointed assistant cameraman. He worked with Wallace Reid for several years then with Gloria Swanson, and won fully-fledged cameraman status when he was sent on an out-of-doors picture.

That was the beginning of his career as an exterior cameraman. He filmed mostly Western pictures, and locations took him to Texas, Canada, Mexico and elsewhere. Paramount then sent him to their Paris studios, and from France he came over to England on one of Paramount's British pictures. Here he met Alexander Korda and signed up with him. Since then he has been with the British film people most of the time, and what was Hollywood's loss has turned out to be Britain's gain, proved by pictures like *49th Parallel*, *Sanders of the River*, *Elephant Boy*, *The Drum*, *Four Feathers*, *The Overlanders*, *The Macomber Affair*, and *Scott of the Antarctic*.

Filming *Scott of the Antarctic* has been in direct contrast to most of Borradaile's locations in tropical countries. He was filming on ice instead of jungles, and spent several months in the Antarctic. "But," he maintains, "it turned out to be less dangerous than most of my trips. My assistant, Bob Moss, and I had to climb a 600ft. hill of solid ice every day, which was the most difficult part of the job. What happened, of course, was that again and again we would just get to the top at the same time as a blizzard, which would put a stop to shooting for the day.

"Our worst experience was made when a 100-mile-an-hour blizzard blew up and lasted two days and nights. It was impossible to stand in it. The only way we could get about was to go down on our hands and knees."

Borradaile covered nearly 30,000 miles on this

expedition, returned to England, and then, after one brief week-end at home, went off to Switzerland for further locations for this picture.

John Mills was with the unit in Switzerland, and one scene called for him to cross the natural bridge of a deep crevasse. Borradaile wanted to get a striking angle for his film, so he had himself and his camera lowered down the crevasse. Dangling there, he filmed the scene and was then hoisted up again. That went off safely, but soon afterwards he had a narrow escape. Too impatient to wait for the guides, he would often go on ahead of the party. He was doing so on this occasion when the others saw him suddenly disappear. He had fallen neck-deep into a crevasse which had been invisible to the naked eye. The guides pulled him out and then opened up the crevasse. It was almost bottomless. They threw huge snowballs down it. Their fall could not even be heard.

Scott of the Antarctic is in Technicolor, and filming in the rarified Antarctic atmosphere presented innumerable problems, but Borradaile, with his usual skill and initiative, overcame them all, helping to create one of Britain's most ambitious pictures.

★ THE BERKELEY ★

Presents

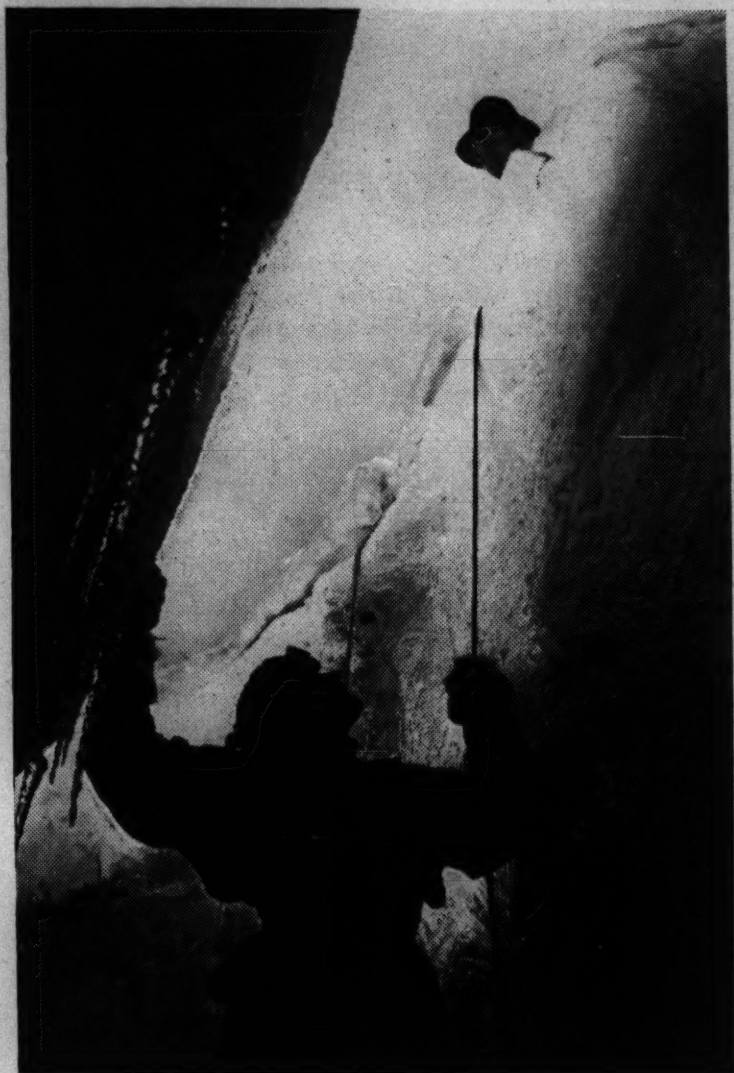
LA BELLE ET LA BETE

Directed by JEAN COCTEAU
with - JEAN MARAIS

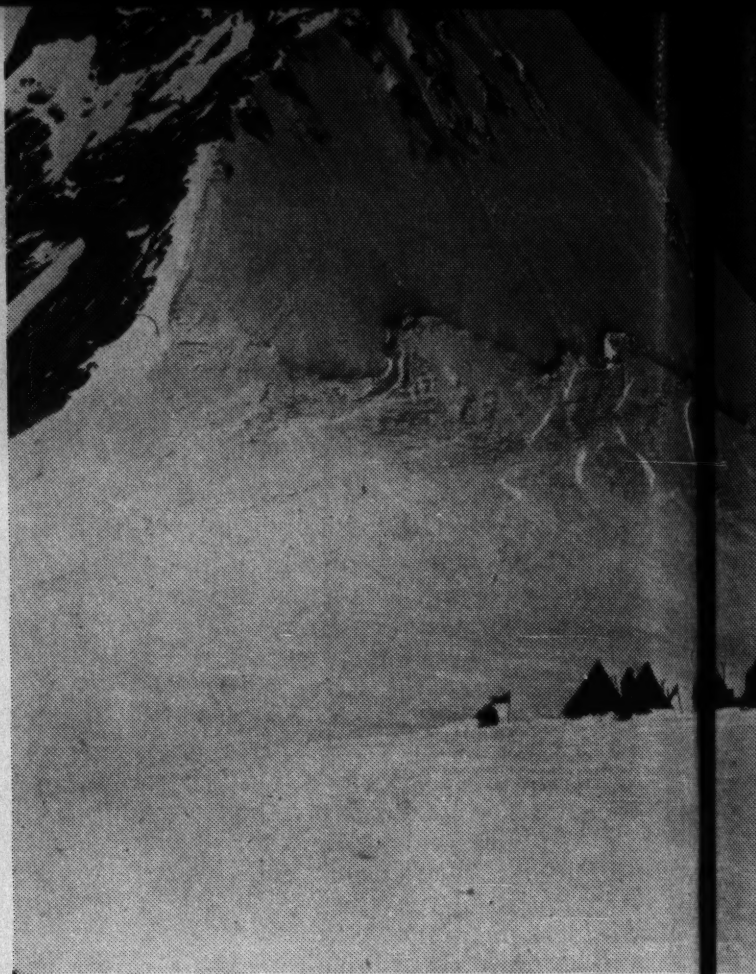
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Many dangers beset the party on their epic journey. A false step meant near death. With encouraging words, Bowers (Reginald Beckwith) hauls up Lashly (Norman Williams) after his fall down a crevasse.



A typical example of the grandeur and danger of the Antarctic.

Captain Scott, after his return from the Antarctic in *The Discovery*, was determined to make another voyage, but not until 1909 were his plans sufficiently advanced to enable him to appeal for men and money.

On the 1st November, 1911, Scott started from Cape Evans on his Polar journey and on the 17th January, 1912, with four companions—Dr. Wilson, Lieut. Bowers, Captain Oates and Petty Officer Evans—he reached the South Pole, to find that he had been forestalled by the Norwegian, Amundsen. Thereafter began the homeward journey. Blizzard



Disappointed, they retrace their steps, but one by one the five gallant men perish. First Evans, then Oates, and finally Scott.

SCOTT OF THE ANTARCTIC

A MICHAEL BALCON PRODUCTION

DIRECTED BY CHARLES FREND



Pausing for a rest, Petty Officer Evans (James Robertson Justice) and Scott (John Mills) look around for a route up Pressure Point on the way up the Beardmore glacier.



ly Scott, Evans and Wilson. Months later their tent, discovered by Atkinson, brought to light Scott's diary, and letters written by the men to their relatives.

Frances Howell asks :—

WHY DO THEY GO ?

Frances Howell wonders why cinema audiences cannot arrive in time to see a film, and struggle with their hats and coats long before the end, obscuring the view from others.

A LITTLE while ago I asked a friend who had been staying in London if she had seen the Olivier *Hamlet*. "No," she said casually. "They were only putting on two definite performances, you know. It was difficult to arrange."

Now she is a reasonable, educated woman and yet she could make a fool remark like that merely, one supposes, because it concerned a film and not a play. Now why? Why is it that for hundreds of years people have found it convenient to attend theatres at stated times, but when they are asked to bring a little intelligent regulation into their cinema-going they throw up their hands and say they can't make it. After all, the cinema as a rule offers three performances daily, whereas the theatre generally puts on only one show nightly, two matinees per week and nothing on Sundays. As a matter of fact, haphazard indulgence in organised entertainment is in the minority. Whoever heard of spectators turning up half way through a football match, and if they tried it with a boxing contest they might find themselves in time to join the exit queues.

We are, therefore, forced to the conclusion that this business is nothing but an attitude of mind. But that does not explain its existence. Of course we know about the people who go to a cinema because it is warm and those who go because it is dark, but just at the moment we are considering people of intellect who go, one presumes, for relaxation and entertainment. Do they then feel themselves better entertained if they see the film back to front, with an organ interlude, news reel, trailers and a second feature between the end and the beginning? Put like that it sounds crazy, yet that is what so many of them do, in spite of the fact that every now and then there comes a film that is totally incomprehensible if you miss the beginning.

All right. Let us suppose that the majority of people go for the sake of the stars, and as long as they get a good eyeful of whoever appeals to them, the story of the film can go hang. But

that won't work, because in a Gallup Poll taken in August, to the question: How do you mainly decide what film you want to see? 37 per cent. replied that they were influenced by the story and 34 per cent. by the stars. It is certainly not a big majority, but one can legitimately add to it the supposedly sane 19 per cent who go on account of reviewers' opinions. Of course, on the debit side we have the morons who go because of the film title or because they go regularly to the same cinema regardless of what is showing—in fact one asks oneself if they couldn't dispense with a film altogether and just sit in the dark.

Further questions in the Gallup Poll elicited the information that 10 per cent. of the people questioned go to the cinema twice or more often a week in summer, and 26 per cent. went once a week. So here we have a quite substantial percentage of the population who are what might be termed inveterate cinema-goers; people who are seemingly prepared to pay anything from 1s. 9d. to 11s. for a seat—well someone does because they're nearly always sold—and yet another questionnaire conducted by an educationalist produced the astonishing deduction that a great many people who make up the daily queues outside British cinemas have no interest whatever in the cinema as such. When asked to name their favourite directors they plumped for Irving Berlin, Douglas Shearer and John Galsworth.

They want Crosby to be a Star

Well, perhaps questions about Directors are a bit too much. After all, the only *make* the films. So these people were asked to name players they had seen in small parts and would like to see starring. It would, I think, be not in the least surprising if they hadn't noticed the names of small part players and therefore couldn't answer. Because apart from the fact that most cinema audiences are on their feet when the cast is on the screen, the fact that it is not put on again at the end makes it difficult to place small part players. But

these people answered all right. They said they would like to see the small part players Crosby, Formby, Bette Davis and Coleman given star parts. Some of them even named actors and actresses long dead. One knows about the celestial choir, but this is surely going a bit far.

On the other hand, when a popularity list of films is published, it invariably shows a pretty good standard of taste and judgment. Earlier this year, too, the manager of a cinema circuit in the Birmingham area took up a newspaper challenge and arranged a season of foreign films to prove, as he thought, that people don't want foreign films. One of the cinemas was at Leamington. People travelled miles to see these films; the box office receipts the first week were a third higher than the average for the year 1947; and in a poll organised by the cinema, 96.3 per cent. voted for more foreign films.

These people, who took such a keen interest, presumably did not arrive in the middle of the film, and may one dare to hope that they did not leave before the end? That is a maddening habit to which the serious film-goer is subjected in the provinces. The moment a large section of the audience thinks it can see the end in view it rises, struggles into overcoats and hats, waving arms across the screen, and then blunders out over the feet and knees of people who have the sense, yes and the good manners, to wait until the end.

Indeed it seems to me that to walk out of a film so long before the end that almost anything can happen after they have gone, argues not only a lack of interest in something which they have paid voluntarily to see, stupidity and an utter lack of consideration for others, but is somehow insulting towards the film. It may be said that you cannot insult shadows on a screen. Then neither can you applaud them. In any case, it is not really the film as such that is concerned, but the art and effort that has gone to its making. A film is the work of the director and artists just as much as a statue—which may get tarred and feathered—is the work of a sculptor. And don't tell me that people leave a cinema early because of catching a last bus home. The other evening I went to an Odeon cinema in my local town. Quite ten minutes before the end people were on the move. When the lights went up I counted seven people downstairs and about thirty upstairs. Yet that cinema draws its audience mainly from the town, which is small enough to be walked from end to end in a quarter of an hour.

So we get back to our starting point. The behaviour of cinema audiences is inscrutable. Nobody knows what they really want nor why they go. But by heaven, I wish they would arrive at the beginning and leave at the end.

Foreign Films

BY A CORRESPONDENT

VISITOR FROM CHINA

At the invitation of the British Council has come Lo Tsin-yu of the China Films Corporation for a three months' visit. I had a chat with him about productions in China, and was very surprised when he told me that his country makes about one hundred and fifty films a year. That, of course, includes areas of China under Communist influence, as well. Lo Tsin-yu has brought with him four of his own productions: "On the Sungari River," "Under Shanghai's Roof," "Mr. Yin Says No!" and a documentary called "People of China." These films will be seen privately in London. I did ask him about the chance of we in Britain seeing Chinese films. But he was non-committal. He hopes to visit France and Belgium as well as the United States where he has many friends in the industry. He once worked with Frank Capra.

CULTURAL FILM COUNCILS

In Czechoslovakia, film production is getting a step nearer the people. Local Cultural Film Councils have been established composed of representatives of Educational Committees, schools, factories councils, Union of Czech Youth, Trade Unions and other organisations. Discussions with audiences are to be organised in order to increase the interest in good films and to enlarge the influence of the audience upon the distribution and the choice of films. Three new films for the autumn are "Prisoner No. 72" based on the play by Frantisek Langer, about a young woman wrongly condemned for murder, "The Summer," a picturisation of Frana Sramek's outstanding play about an adolescent boy who meets a very beautiful woman, and "The Child of Nature," adapted from a short story by Bozena Nemcova about a young girl who grows up in a village which hates her and compels her to flee because she has no mother.

LATINS GET TOGETHER

A common bond through cinema is being established between the Latin countries. "La Chartreuse de Parme" (The Charterhouse of Parma) is an example of close collaboration. This production of Christian Jaque is based on a story by Stendhal, is being made in co-operation with Scalera of Rome, and stars leading French actors Renee Faure, Maria Casares, Gerard Philipe, Goedel and Salou.

HUNGARIAN FILMS SPURT FORWARD

Geza Radvanyi, the well-known Hungarian producer whose "Somewhere in Europe" won second prize at the Locarno Film Festival is now making a new film called "Circus Maximus," about an intellectual who escapes from Fascist oppression during the war to join the partisans in their fight for liberation. Other interesting films being made in Hungary include "Hot Fields," adapted from a famous novel from Moricz, and "Fire," by Gyula Hay, played by a group of students from a People's College in Hungary. Also being made is a film commemorating the centenary of the 1848 revolution, and of great interest is a film about Sandor Rozsa, who was something like our Robin Hood. The first puppet film to be made is based on the poem "The Shepherd Riding On His Donkey," by Sandor Petofi. Altogether eight features will have been made this year. About 25 are to be made in 1949 and in 1950 it is hoped to reach the 50 mark. Not bad for a new industry!

FILM REVIEWS

PAISA

PAISA is essentially screen-journalism. Roberto Rossellini, its famous director, made this film while literally following in the footsteps of the advancing Allied armies in Italy. Its greatness lies in its stark, uncompromising realism. Its weakness is the weakness of all creative work done in the heat of the moment—a lack of discipline, a lack of balance, a lack of proper selection.

In my opinion, *Paiza* never quite reaches the heights of *Open City*. This is hardly surprising when you consider that it consists of six totally different stories; consequently, the characterisation is sometimes very sketchy indeed.

Nevertheless, there are some moments in this film that will never cease to live in your memory. Perhaps the most poignant occurs in Naples, city of destitution. A small boy steals a negro G.I.'s boots. The negro catches the boy and accompanies him back to his home, where the boots are hidden. "Home," for the boy, comprises a cave-like shelter where entire families and dozens of orphaned children are all crowded together. The negro learns that the boy, too, has no parents—they were both killed. Holding the returned boots, he stands there, aghast at the sight of such terrible human misery. Suddenly, he lets the boots fall on to the ground, then he hurries away.

Paiza is a film that must be seen by everyone.

And as 75 per cent. of it is in English there is no possible excuse for exhibitors refusing to show it. I suggest that you go along and have a chat with the manager of your local cinema.



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THE FALLEN IDOL

A PHOTOGRAPHIC art is, in the last resort, an art of the ordinary. It may by its fantastic devices create vision and spectacle, but a shot of a child or a spontaneous gesture will bring you slap bang to cinema's own essential virtue."

The Fallen Idol bears out the truth of those words of John Grierson. For in this film every shot of little Bobby Henrey, every seemingly spontaneous gesture of this child reaches out at your heart.

The screenplay is by Graham Greene, and it is excellent. Directed by Carol Reed, and with Sir Ralph Richardson, Michele Morgan and Sonia Dresdel giving of their best, this film is at times sheer poetry. It is my firm belief that it will become one of the classics of the cinema.

THE WINSLOW BOY

ANOTHER beautiful British film. Made by the same team that gave us *The Way to the Stars*. The screenplay, by Terence Rattigan and Anatole de Grunwald, is among the best ever written. Anthony Asquith once again proves himself our most sensitive director. Robert Donat, always a fine actor, here reaches greatness. And Margaret Leighton shows us that the really good stage actress can readily adapt herself to the film medium.

ESTHER WATERS

KATHLEEN RYAN, as the servant girl with the illegitimate baby, is as effective as the poor script allows her to be. Dirk Bogarde—the nineteenth century spiv, who gives her the baby, wins a small fortune at the racecourses, marries her, loses all his money and then dies—also gives a competent performance.

Worth while seeing for its authentic Derby scenes.

THE EXILE

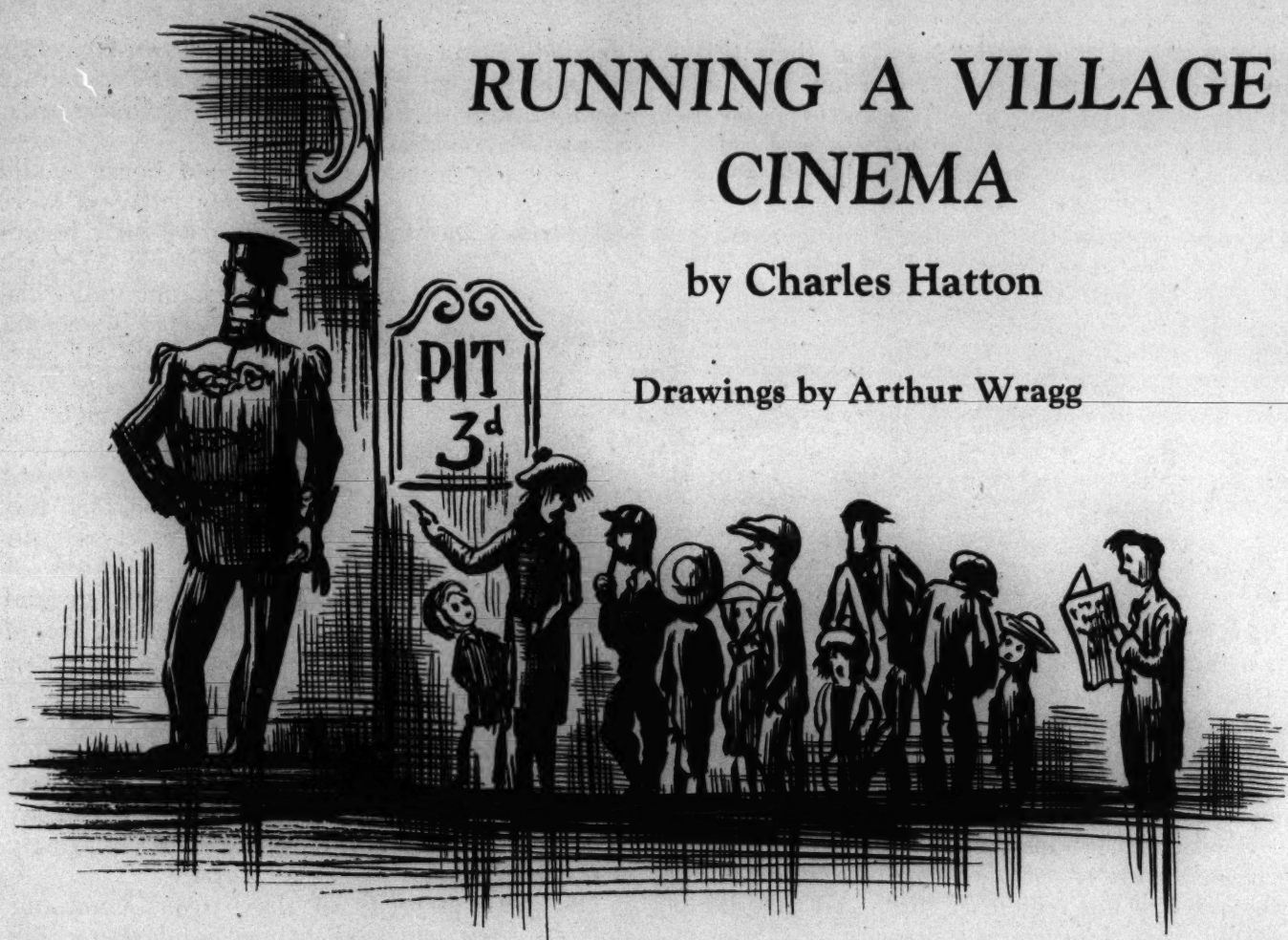
I ASSUME that Douglas Fairbanks, Jr.'s, aim in writing and directing this film was not to portray an authentic slice of English history but to amuse and entertain. Unfortunately, the direction is slow and tedious, and Fairbanks (the exiled Charles II) never convinces one that he is anything but a likeable young American who never neglects his limbering-up exercises in the mornings!

Paule Crosset, a pretty newcomer, plays Katie (the girl he meets in Holland) in a rather colourless fashion. Maria Montez sparkles by contrast as a glamorous French countess. On the whole a rather wearisome 92 minutes.

RUNNING A VILLAGE CINEMA

by Charles Hatton

Drawings by Arthur Wragg



Austin Welland's experiences as the manager of a village cinema, known as the "Limp."

THE local ginger beer king of 1914, who transformed an ancient furniture warehouse into the village's first cinema, was no doubt inspired by the traditions of distant Greece when he called it the Olympic, but the first reels had hardly rattled through the projector before every soul in the village knew it as the "Limp."

In those early days, the projector was in an enclosure separated from the audience by a low rail, and it was worked by hand. There was no second machine, and there was a pause at the end of each reel while another was fitted. If the operator was in some danger of missing his last tram home, the pace quickened most appreciably, and the hero literally flashed across the screen to extricate his lady from the villain's final machination.

When I took over the management of the "Limp," it had passed through at least five different hands in some twenty-odd years, and several thousand pounds had been lost there, chiefly through attempting to compete with cinemas in a town three miles away. My managing director had no such ambitions.

We entertained no high-flown ideas of improving public taste or capturing super-attractions; we simply offered our patrons an enormous quantity of the cheapest film fare we could buy. To begin with, I had to disillusion the film travellers as to any ideas they may have cherished as to getting a percentage of our takings. We bought our programmes at flat rates—rarely more than four pounds for a three-day show, and if the travellers didn't like it, then we just bought a bunch of films from a rival concern.

I spent some amusing hours with those film salesmen, and enjoyed comparing their methods of approach. They were a breath from the outside world, and they knew it. They were prepared to spend just so much time with you, laughing, joking and gossiping for fifty-five minutes and talking high-pressure business in the last five. Sometimes, if you dug in your heels and refused to accept their terms, they stalked out of the office in quite a melodramatic manner, but they always came back, usually accompanied by the most glamorous blonde on their staff.

It was not long before I discovered that films

which contained the word "love" in their title proved a very indifferent attraction to our patrons; also, that protracted scenes of passion made them extremely uncomfortable and self-conscious. So these were always snipped out of the films after the first showing.

Often, it appeared that the cheaper programmes found the most favour, and we booked long successions of films which I should imagine were made primarily for sale to small cinemas in the middle-west of America, and which were never shown at any of the large cinemas in this country.

We could not afford the high prices asked for even a third-run of any newsreel—and I have still to be convinced that these bring in a penny to the box-office of the average cinema—but we never failed to put on two serials a week, and these were certainly money well spent.

It was an exceptional week's business if we took more than fifty pounds at the box-office; the average was in the region of thirty, so this did not permit what the stage folk describe as "fancy money" in the way of salaries.

Sid, the chief operator got a pound a week; Albert, his assistant, received fifteen shillings; the cashier was paid ten shillings and the usherettes, who did not wear uniform, got five shilling and were glad of the job in those days. It must be remembered that they worked evenings only and Saturday afternoons, and as there were few social activities in the village they were glad of this means to relieve the tedium of the long evenings.

As manager, I drew four pounds a week, and considered myself quite fairly paid, compared with bank clerks and factory workers, for my job could not, by any stretch of imagination, be described as arduous; in fact much of it was pleasant. The biggest worry was preparing the returns required by the government offices.

Children's matinees were also a bit disturbing at times, but Albert, our elderly general factotum, had his own methods of quelling disturbances. He

carried a twenty-foot bamboo rod down the centre aisle, and brought it down with unfailing accuracy on the heads of the ringleaders, to restore order almost immediately.

On many occasions, our second house would not run its full course, for our villagers were early risers and had disappeared to their homes by ten o'clock. Though there was one individual who delighted in keeping us there to give a performance for his own special benefit right to the bitter end.

It often seemed ironical to me that this little hall, where the fourth-rate products of Hollywood were ground out twice-nightly, should be the main social activity in the village. This was not entirely a debit item in the scheme of things, for the villagers were at least able to relax while they watched those flickering panoramas so alien to English eyes. I often sat through a cowboy picture twice myself to enjoy the amazingly beautiful scenery.

The great majority of the patrons knew our staff by their christian names, and there was always a friendly atmosphere prevailing. I had only to stand by the main exit after the first house on Mondays and Thursdays to be able to get a very good estimate of what money the programme would have taken at the end of the three days' run.

We were at the "Limp" for no other reason than making money (and we made it!), but I think we filled a useful place in the life of the village, and the old hall was regarded with real affection by scores of patrons who had spent many happy hours there in their "courting days."

Entertainment tax and film quotas are tending to drive the small village cinemas out of business, and I heard recently that the "Limp" is shortly to be transformed once more, this time into a garage. But I would never be surprised to see it re-emerge as a place of entertainment, with its Neon sign crackling in the quiet village street, the projector whirring noisily through a half-open window, and film salesmen's cars outside.



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Film Fashions

She Started with A Pillow Case

BY JOY PEAKE

When you leave the cinema do you ever think of the clothes THEY wore? Whatever the period of the film, the thought, skill, and ingenuity of the designer help to create the characters of the stars.



*Matilda Etches photographed in her
Frith Street Salon*



The world of fashion attracts many talents, but only a few aspiring designers reach the top. Matilda Etches attained success through her singleness of purpose and a distinct flair for the art of design. From a very early age she loved her scissors and used them expertly for her first effort. This, she tells me, was when she vented her magic upon one of her mother's pillow cases, transforming it into an extremely modish tunic!

Beautiful fabrics inspire her, and draping them on a model-stand, she cuts directly into the material with a cunning and practised hand. Her clothes have great drama, achieved by unerring cut and simplicity of line.

Miss Etches has interpreted effectively the ideas of many top-ranking designers and painters for the theatre and film. The first period film for which she made the costumes was the "Life and Death of Colonel Blimp" and since then she has co-operated with eminent designers on important screen and stage successes, including Cecil Beaton ("An Ideal Husband" and "Anna Karenina"), Graham Sutherland ("The Wanderer"), Oliver Messel ("The Rivals"), Roger Furse ("Henry 5th"), and Michael Ayrton (Sadlers Wells Production of "The Faery Queen"). Miss Etches also worked with Leslie Hurry on the designs for the Ballet "Hamlet" and "The Birds" (Chiang Yee).

One of her greatest achievements are the costumes for "Caesar and Cleopatra," which were the result of nine months solid work to Oliver Messels' Brilliant designs.

Making clothes for the stage and film is only part of her versatility as a creative designer. Her first dress show in 1934 proved her real ability as a Courtourier of unusual merit.

In 1947 she gave her first couture collection in London since 1938, and as her main interest lies in this direction, it is to be hoped that she will continue to use her talents in this way, and in time to bring some of her lovely creations within the range of the average woman's pocket. This ambition we all hope will soon be realised!

Mrs. John Mills wearing the exquisite dress designed for her by Matilda Etches for the command performance of "Scott of the Antarctic." It is decolleté, in grey and pink flowered brocade with a black velvet bow enhancing the bustle back.

ANOTHER FILMED OPERA

by Hans Keller

Hans Keller discusses the effect opera has on the screen, pointing out the advantages and disadvantages, but always encouraging this almost new and artistic interpretation of music

WE seem to be in for a spell of filmed stage operas. After the first filmed opera, *The Barber of Seville*, which I criticised in these pages some time ago, another Italian film version of an Italian opera, i.e., *Rigoletto*, has now been released, and plans are going ahead for the filming of Mozart operas to be performed by the Vienna State Opera. Meanwhile, I continue to make myself a bore by constantly prophesying, without, for the time being, the least success, the advent of the real film opera, by which I mean an opera originally written for the film.

I do not, however, wish to imply that there is no point in film versions of stage operas. There would indeed be lots of points in these ventures if works were offered which are not included in the repertoire of every opera company as a matter of course. I have previously pointed out to readers of this journal that Issue No. 16 of the *This Modern Age* series, i.e., *The British—Are They Artistic?*, contains quite a substantial excerpt from Benjamin Britten's comic opera *Albert Herring*. In fact this documentary is the first film to feature a contemporary opera. Now while I cannot claim to be a specialist in the study of box office receipts, I should like to put the question—Why should a feature-length film version of *Albert Herring* necessarily be doomed to utter financial failure? After all, Britten—beside or despite his genius—is the most-discussed serious composer of our time, and in this country undoubtedly the most popular.

As for Italian opera, surely there could have been found a sufficiently popular masterpiece which is yet not quite so hackneyed as *Rigoletto*? For instance, what about Verdi's own *Falstaff*? I find it difficult to convince myself that many of those who go to see *Rigoletto* would stay away from *Falstaff*. The absurdity of bringing the *Rigoletto* film to London is apparent upon a glance at our current opera programmes. During the time of the London run of the film *Rigoletto* can also be heard, in flesh, both at Covent Garden and at Sadler's Wells. "Ah," the would-be connoisseur will protest, "but at our opera houses you get the thing in

English, whereas the picture offers you Italian opera in Italian, sung and played by Italians." There would indeed be strength in this argument if the quality of the film's sound track—not to speak, for the moment, of the actual performance—were sufficient to bring out, and make enjoyable, the advantages of an Italian over an English performance. Unfortunately, however, the recording is at its best only partially true and always lacking in timbre, so that the music lover will unhesitatingly prefer the current live English productions to the canned Italian one.

Yet the film will doubtless offer the opera fan many enjoyable moments, decidedly superior as its track is to that of *The Barber of Seville*. At the same time the improvement is one in degree rather than in kind, which is to say that most of the *Barber's* sound defects recur in *Rigoletto*, but to a less painful extent. First of all there are again those variations in the pitch of the sound track that have proved so enervating in the *Barber*; they are now less frequent and less lavish. But in one or two places we get a new brand of pitch contortions. That is to say, the orchestra's pitch suddenly rises, while the voices retain theirs! We have never previously heard this particular defect in re-recording.

Another, and more common flaw in the recording is the lack of balance between voices and orchestra. Often the voices are far too strong as compared with the orchestra, while occasionally they are too weak. But though faithful balance is hardly ever achieved, we get none of the ridiculous distortions of balance we had to endure in the *Barber*.

As to the actual performance, the singing, while often gripping, is not throughout on a level which justifies its perpetuation on a sound track. Mario Filippeschi, in point of fact, who sings the Duke of Mantua, is in several instances as dissolute in his intonation as in his love life. Tito Gobbi, too—the title figure in this film as well as that of the *Barber*—tends to stray from the narrow path of intonation, as does (at times unbearably) Marcella Govoni, who gives Gilda, *Rigoletto's* daughter. Nor are Guilo Neri as the



PREFABRICATED FOREST

DISGUIISING a power station to look like a forest was just one of the many photographic problems director George Sherman had to solve in the Technicolor filming of *Red Canyon*, adapted from the book "Wildfire," by Zane Grey. In order to film the thrilling horse races at Kanab, Utah, and still keep the period setting inviolate, it was necessary to block out a power station just beyond the race track. Sherman sent workers ten miles into the backwoods to bring back enough trees to hide the modern structure, which was camouflaged with 50 pine trees, 15 aspens, 38 oaks and 250 assorted saplings.

REED LEAVES FOR VIENNA

FOLLOWING the success of the Graham Greene-Carol Reed film *The Fallen Idol*, Carol Reed and his unit have left for Vienna to start location scenes for *The Third Man*. The unit set off in high spirits, forewarned and forearmed—with their warmest clothing, soap and cigarettes

... Carol Reed and his associate producer, Hugh Perceval, were received on arrival by Vienna's 75-year-old mayor, General Koerner, in the magnificent Baroque Mayor's parlour in the city. Orson Welles will star in the new Graham Greene film *The Third Man*, directed by Carol Reed.

FIRST SCENE SHOT FIRST !

JEAN SIMMONS, world-acclaimed for her performance as Ophelia in *Hamlet*, has started work on her new picture at Denham Studios. It is *Adam and Evelynne*, a Two Cities film produced and directed by Harold French, in which Jean co-stars with Stewart Granger. Jean plays Evelynne, an orphan who is adopted under strange circumstances by Adam Black, a smart West End gambler, played by Stewart Granger. Unusual feature was that the first scene to be shot was, for a change, the first in the script. Jean, in pigtailed and a plain costume, took part, early in the morning, in "bedtime" orphanage scenes.

THE DISAPPOINTED OLD LADY

FOR scenes in *The Elusive Pimpernel* on Mont St. Michel, a market was set up by the unit, which contained booths selling everything from sausages to sabots. After the market had been struck and the wares dispersed, an old lady approached Joseph Bato, location Art Director, and enquired if the "market" was over. Not wishing to disillusion her he explained that, yes, the market was finished. Oh, how disappointing. Only yesterday she had seen some sabots which would have been just the right size for her grandson, and now she had brought the money and the "market" was already over ... !

hired assassin and Anna Maria Canali as his sister always in tune.

The visual itself is in its essence the same as that of the *Barber*. Naturally, that is, it has been impossible to employ more than rudimentary film technique in what is basically and unalterably a stage work. Those who are so proud of their young and sometimes coxy film technique that they cannot tolerate the intrusion of stage technique into the cinema, not even on an exceptional occasion like this, will turn away in horror from what they will call an impossibly static film. Others, more tolerant, will realise that—stage technique or no stage technique—the film is driven forward by the nowise static inter-

pretation of the tragedy which the music proffers. In fact the only places where the flow of the work is interrupted are those where some would-be filmic, but unmusical cutting has been deemed necessary, resulting in abrupt changes of key which are musically unmotivated.

And even such an apparently trifling matter as the absence of intervals between the acts goes against the music; short intermissions would surely have been easily possible. But perhaps it is all to the good that not every possible concession has been made to the theatrical nature of the work, for in that case the need for the creation of an original film opera would not have been so acutely apparent.

FILM MONTHLY REVIEW ANNUAL 1948

Containing a collection of articles and numerous pictures which have appeared in the monthly issues of Film Monthly Review.

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